

Chapter 2

THE REPRESENTATIONS OF MOTHERHOOD IN DORIS LESSING'S *EACH HIS OWN WILDERNESS* AND *PLAY WITH A TIGER*

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INTRODUCTION

The mother figure on the stage was dominant, especially in 1950s British drama. Motherhood as both a biological and social term was represented in its relation to public and private spheres, and in these plays, the concepts of “femininity” and “femaleness” were discussed in their representations in the family and public arena. The representation of motherhood with all its prerequisites of traditional femininity dominated the stage until the mid-1950s. In the first half of the 1900s, the family as a patriarchal institution experienced some specific transformations which strengthened the traditional natural role of the mother. In the 1920s, middle-class families changed their form into nuclear families. The extended aristocratic families were replaced by nuclear families that had to earn their living in the public sphere. Thus, for middle-class families, motherhood was perceived as a natural “job” for women in the private sphere. Women isolated from the public sphere were locked behind the doors. Within these terms, the representation of womanhood was mostly limited to its relation to motherhood at this period. Although the two World Wars urged these women who were reduced to their biological femininities to the labour force for a limited period as an economic strategy and need, they had to give up the public sphere in the post-war era. They restored their traditional role as mothers in the domestic sphere by giving back all these job opportunities to the men who accomplished their return from war.

“The topic of motherhood has been extensively debated by post-war and contemporary women playwrights in Britain, often in a process that also addresses the relationship between theatre and feminism in a British context” (Komporaly, 2007). Gale also associates the post-war representation of motherhood with psychological and social relations and familial duties like marriage and

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motherhood imposed upon women's shoulders. While the contextual focus in the plays is on motherhood within the family life, the women's shattered experience of motherhood and womanhood is mainly presented in a discursive frame in the plays (1995). Primarily, both sociological and psychoanalytical theoretical frameworks related to motherhood have thrown the complex issue of motherhood, especially related to Freudian theories on female sexuality, into question by contemporary feminist critics like Lucy Irigaray, Helene Cixous, Kate Millet, Julia Kristeva, and Nancy Chodorow criticising traditional femininity image which is defined by the limitations of her biology by patriarchy. The issues of mother-child relations, mother-daughter relations, female psychology, reproduction rights and contraception, abortion, pre- and postpartum periods, and parenthood have constituted the basis of these criticisms related to motherhood and femininity. Gale emphasises that the 1950s were an emergence of "the mother as a stage persona moves away from the 'natural' into the social. By the 1950s, the mother had been moved away from the extended family unit, and as in the Lessing play, there are positive if limited choices outside of life in the family unit to be made" (1995). Within these terms, we will discuss the representations of motherhood in *Each His Own Wilderness* and *Play with a Tiger* by Doris Lessing as examples of post-war drama.

THE REPRESENTATIONS OF MOTHERHOOD IN *EACH HIS OWN WILDERNESS*

Each His Own Wilderness (1958) presents an intense and volatile conflict between Myra and Tony, a mother and son. The play opens after "an H-bomb explosion" (Act I, Scene I), symbolising Tony, who has dropped like a bombshell in the middle of Myra's life. Tony is back from his military service after two years, and he is 22 years old now. Dreaming of being an electrician, he has dropped out of his architecture education, which is about to finish. Unlike her activist mother, He is a pacifist who "wants to be a tramp in order to escape the corruptions of modern life" (Act I, Scene I). Initially, his weak and fragile character is revealed as "an adolescent girl who makes herself attractive as a form of self-assertation but is afraid when the attention she draws is more than gently chivalrous" (Act I, Scene I). This description suggests Tony's childish behaviours later in the play; he wanders in the house with a gun that sounds like a tin soldier. Throughout the play, Tony is also an attention-seeker, especially of his mother's. He has no cause in this life; he hates and adores women. Women exhaust Tony due to their "utterly appalling vitality" (Act I, Scene I) and Myra is one of these women Tony

cannot endure. Myra is a middle-aged single woman who is involved in activist demonstrations and rallies for banning the H-Bomb. However, Tony expects “order” in the house established by her mother, and this expectation becomes the primary drive in the conflict between mother and son.

Tony first complains about the irritating “disorder” in the house, which is a sign of “disorder” in his mother’s life. He asks, “What a mess. God, what a mess... why is everything in such a mess, Mother?” (Act I, Scene II). Myra is a political protestor and belongs to the public sphere more than the domestic one. She has no time and is also fed up with all this compulsory domestic work attained to the responsibility of the female sex. Tony, the only representative of a patriarchal manhood in his father’s absence, has conventional expectations from his unconventional mother as “the head of the family” who demands his natural rights on his mother. Kate Millet, in her outstanding work *Sexual Politics* (2000), describes the family as an essential patriarchal institution, and this smallest patriarchal unit is constructed as a controlling mechanism ensuring conformity as a representation of a larger male-oriented society by a strict patriarchal kinship which grants the father a total control over his wife. Patriarchy holds these truths self-evident that fathers and sons have undeniable rights over their women in the family. In the absence of a father, the male line offers his new ruler, the son. In this respect, the tension between son and mother is also related to Myra’s relationships with men. Tony ironically refers to her male friends as “uncles” who are possible father figures to him. “I’ve had so many uncles. Well Uncle Sandy?” (Act I, Scene I). Tony, as “the new head of the family”, cannot stand the existence of men in his mother’s house; for him, these men, including young Sandy, are rivals who are about to capture his mother. Tony is jealous of this young man at his age. Within this term, he is suspicious of her mother’s relations with the male sex.

“The play came out watching the conflicts, listening to the arguments between a political mother and her unpolitical son” (Lessing, 1962). Tony is both pessimist and apolitical. He sees all the political struggles he relates with his mother as vain because the horrors of the H-bomb are inescapable. He insists that his mother should resign herself from this futile fight. All these women, including his mother involved in this cause, are “the dilettante daughters of revolution... who haven’t succeeded in getting or staying married” (Act I, Scene I). In his criticism of activist women, a woman’s rightful position can be related to her home and all the limitations accompanying it. Tony’s return from military service is a burden for Myra to be able to live her life independently in the absence of a husband. She wants to keep her female integrity while craving her son’s approval for her as an

independent woman at the same time. Milly, another middle-aged activist woman who shares the same political views as Myra, is another mother figure. Schlueter comments on Myra and Milly as untraditional mother figures in a standard world since they are divorced or widowed and willingly single as middle-aged women. Although they are expected to be dedicated to their respective sons, the two middle-aged women dedicate themselves to social and political purposes on the front lines in the public sphere, and they fail to achieve a harmonious relationship with their sons, who are already indifferent to their mothers' political causes. "Not only is a conflict of generations present but also a gulf that is never satisfactorily breached: the mothers, as fairly typical women of the 1950s, want their children to make up their own minds about life, while the sons long for a serene, settled way of life" (Schlueter, 2003).

Both mother figures, Myra and Milly, seem to be independent. However, they are entrapped in their mother roles, especially for Myra, Tony is eager to master her life. He is obsessed with Myra's physical appearance. Myra wears trousers, which is still unconventional among patriarchal men, and she does not usually wear make-up. Throughout the play, he utters his desire to see his mother like a doll who wears dresses, and it turns out to be an obsession for him in this sentence, "I can't stand it, seeing you stop around the house half of the day looking like that... for heaven's sake put some lipstick on at least" (Act II, Scene II). He sees Myra through the male gaze. Laura Mulvey defines this with her theory of "woman as image and man as bearer of the look" (1989). Mulvey asserts that "in their traditional exhibitionist role, women (passive) are simultaneously looked at and displayed by determining male gaze (active), and their appearance is coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (1989). In this sense, Tony's obsession with a perfect female body image is apparent with his mother. Domination of patriarchy over subordinated women is expressed through Myra's body image, which is not appreciated by her son and also changes its form into psychological violence on Myra, who "is cleaning the stairs and expected to be loved for being herself" (Act I, Scene I).

In this play, lack of communication between sexes and between young as the son and adult as the mother is felt at most. While Tony, as the son, never follows her mother's advice on politics, education, and life, Myra cannot communicate with his son. Tony is informed about her mother's intentions on him by strangers, and this causes a broader gap between son and mother. Tony learns from young secretary Sandy and Myra's politician friend Mike that Myra has plans for her son to complete his education in architecture. Myra also asks Milly to help bridge

her and Tony because “she can’t talk to him” (Act II, Scene I). Motherly Milly’s conversation with Tony turns into implied sexual intercourse; in need of a caring mother, he breaks the divine “mother-son” image in an Oedipal attempt.

Tony’s consistent criticisms of her compel Myra to think about her life. To Philip, an old lover who is about to marry young Rosemary, she confesses that “half the people I know, people who’ve spent all their lives fighting and trying to change things, they’ve gone inside their homes and shut their front doors and gone domestic and comfortable – and safe” (Act I, Scene I). The domestic image of traditional womanhood is seeded through Tony’s pejorative tone to Myra throughout the play. Tony sees her mother as corrupt. She embodies all the unconventional images in herself; she is wearing trousers, is untidy, swears in front of people, stays with a young man of his son’s age and is physically unattractive to Tony; however, she is serving a purpose, unlike Tony as the unpolitical son: “Dreams, dreams, dreams – like your lot did? What are the words – don’t say I’ve forgotten them, they’ve been stuffed down my throat all my life – liberty, democracy, brotherhood – and what’s that other one? Ah, yes, comradeship, that’s it. A world full of happy brothers and comrades” (Act I, Scene II). Domesticity is the only possible choice for women if they return to their homes from the public sphere. Myra is expected to return her entrapment in a motherhood image idealized by Tom. However, she has been suffering from this idealization:

It occurs to me that for the last twenty-two years, my life has been governed by yours – by your needs. Oh, you may not think so – but the way I’ve lived, what I’ve done, my whole life has been governed by your needs. And what for ... [contemptuously] What for – a little monster of egotism – that’s what you are. A petty, envious, spiteful little egotist, concerned with nothing but yourself (Act II, Scene II).

Myra has sacrificed her life for her son and his expectations and continues to make the same sacrifices unconsciously. She has an intimate relationship with Mike; however, a possible marriage will result in another entrapment: “Mike hanging around waiting for your first moment of weakness so you’ll give in and marry him” (Act II, Scene I). When Tony finds out Mike’s intentions for his mother after seeing them arm in arm, he changes his attitude towards Mike and forces Myra to decline her marital intentions with Mike. Tony also sharpens his tongue and becomes more impudent while talking about her mother’s sexuality: “It’s going to be such a jolly night. Imagine it – Rosemary and Uncle Philip in one bed – my bed, but let that pass. Then there’s mother. Will it be Sandy or Uncle Mike, do you suppose? Why not both?” (Act II, Scene I). Tony has his hand in

separating Myra and Mike although their marriage has been announced to the guests. Tony occurs to be the destructive motive in Myra's life, especially in her relation to all possible male suitors around her, although Tony accuses her of being "destructive": "There isn't anything you touch which doesn't go to pieces... you live in a mess of love affairs and committees" (Act II, Scene II).

Milly and Myra, for a limited time, are left on the stage as a symbol of sisterhood. Both women live in a patriarchal circle and have demanding sons and lovers. Their parallel experiences raise consciousness among them to acknowledge the sexist world around them. The solidarity of Milly and Myra is significant in constructing their freedom, which will be revealed at the end of the play. Establishing a collective consciousness among women stands for what women of the 1950s and 1960s demanded in second-wave feminism: sisterhood. The mutual understanding between Milly and Myra deconstructs the mythical dependency of women over their sons. As the unconventional mother figure, Milly confesses, "We've committed the basic and unforgivable crime of giving you birth – but we had no choice, after all" (Act II, Scene II). Myra also admits the unbearable situation of living in the same house with someone who cannot stand her, and she declares that she is going and leaving Tony behind all alone with his intolerable egotism and says:

There are a lot of things I've wanted to do for a long time, and I haven't done them. [laughing] Perhaps I'll take the money and go off; why not? Or perhaps I'll be a tramp. I could be, you know. I could walk out of this house with my needs in a small suitcase ... and I shall. Or perhaps I'll go on that boat to the Pacific to the testing area – I wanted to do that and didn't, because of you (Act II, Scene II).

Tony now, is abandoned physically by her mother "in his own wilderness". For the first time, she takes complete control of her life regardless of her identity as a mother. Torn between two identities of an ideal mother as a threat to her integrity and a liberated woman, she breaks into tears, and this time, tears are not shed in remorse: "Yes, I am crying. I've been alive for fifty years. Isn't that good enough cause for tears" (Act II, Scene II). As Gale points out, "the fifty-year-old woman who leaves the stage at the end of the play is a far cry from the lace and bespectacled matriarchs which signify traditional motherhood" (1995).

THE REPRESENTATIONS OF MOTHERHOOD IN *PLAY WITH A TIGER*

Lessing's second play in terms of representation of motherhood on the stage is *Play with a Tiger* (1962), which is thematically related to her most-known novel,

The Golden Book. This play is about, as Lessing herself introduces the play, “the rootless, declassed people who live in bed-sitting-rooms or small flats or the cheaper hotel rooms, and such people are usually presented on the stage in a detailed squalor of realism which to my mind distracts attention from what is interesting about them” (Lessing, 1962). The play’s first act opens with Anna and Tom, both in their mid-thirties. Tom is a middle-class Englishman about to be employed in a woman’s magazine, *Jeffries*, to administrate “the spiritual needs of the women of the nation through the ‘Ladies Own’” (Act I). As her surname is quite suggestive, Anna Freeman is a well-educated and viable woman both socially and economically. So, she does not interiorize the traditional standards and limitations of womanhood at her age. Anna Freeman is a freelance writer who is in a dilemma of a total commitment to her freedom in any relationship and being about to marry Tom. Anna is a controversial woman within a patriarchal social system. She is a writer, which is still a male-dominated occupation in the publishing world, and, contrary to society’s expectations, she is a single mother who lives alone at the age of thirty-five in the middle of the city. Harry is a middle-aged journalist who is not very successful. As a conventional portrayal of manhood, he is closely integrated with society’s sexist values and gender roles. Harry is married to Helen, who is only discussed in the conversations and does not appear in this play as a signifier of her actual absence as a liberated self in this society. Mary is Anna’s closest friend, a middle-aged woman who is sexually and financially free compared to Helen. Anna and Mary occasionally share parental preoccupations and responsibilities. Dave is an American liberate who exploits Anna and Janet emotionally and sexually; in return, Janet, a young American lover, responds to his sexual exploitation by trapping him with her pregnancy. Although engaged to Tom, Anna is attracted to Dave sexually, and Dave also responds to this attraction. They are lovers; however, neither wants to commit for a lifetime. In this play, with all these characters from different roots and attitudes towards gender roles, Lessing presents us with a circle of friends with unconventional experiences based on sexuality, marriage, trust, motherhood, and relationships.

As the play opens, we see Anna and Tom, both “tense, irritated and miserable” (Act I), in the middle of an argument in Anna’s home. Both Anna and Tom are sarcastic in their attitude, and the lack of communication between them is sensed immediately; while she is talking about a man who is obsessed with a lesbian and stands at her door all day long, he directly talks to Anna. Anna does not want Tom to take this job, which is “boring, phoney and stupid” (Act I). This job indicates everything she has opposed, a regular job taken by a comfort-loving middle-class

citizen. Tom also undervalues Anna's career when compared to his stable one and criticizes her motherhood within these terms;

TOM: Writing a little review here, a little article there, an odd poem or two, a reflection on the aspect of a sidelight on the back-wash of some bloody movement or other – reading tuppenny-halfpenny novels for publishers' Mr Bloody Black's new book is or is not an advance on his last. Well, Anna, is it really worth it?

ANNA: Yes it is. I'm free to live as I like. You won't be, ever again.

TOM: And worrying all the time how you're going to find the money for what your kid wants. Do you think he's going to thank you for living like this? (Act I)

Anna is reminded of her responsibilities in womanhood and motherhood, which will ultimately bind her to domesticity. Anna is not satisfied with the turn of their relationship because it is in a complete dead-end. She has chosen to live alone and be financially independent enough to make a life and care for her son. She is a sexually-free woman, desires for men and pleasure and does not lean towards marriage either.

In an age in which marriage is the only path to female fulfilment, for Anna, marriage is a burden to achieve her dreams. She becomes less "feminine" by not choosing a proper husband to settle down as a wife and mother in the eyes of Jack, Tom and her own mother; on the contrary, she is determined to pursue a new life on her own. She is not seeking a man as a self-established and self-reliant woman. Anna's idea of marriage has been shaped in her younger ages in her relation to her own mother, and Anna objects to reproduce her mother's destiny in her life: "I'm not going to be like you, ma, I'm not, I'm not" (Act II). She objects to only possible choices offered to women then and denies reproducing her conventional mother image in her liberated identity. Nancy Chodorow describes this reproduction process as "the reproduction of mothering". She states that "women's mothering reproduces itself cyclically. Women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother. Mother-daughter affinity always reproduces itself" (qtd. in Greiner, 1993). Gender roles constructed in the family are first internalized by children and then constitutionalized in constructing one's self. Here, Anna deconstructs her bondage with her mother as a dull and submissive woman and redefines womanhood and motherhood in a more liberated attitude.

Act II is quite picturesque in portraying that Anna and Dave's dialogues about their childhood years show how social instructions and the traditional structure of families effectively construct one's self as an adult. Although Anna and Dave have similar attitudes towards marriage and parenting, they cannot manage a

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relationship, and both strive for an answer in vain. Anna tries conclusions with herself, which is defined by socially constructed “gender”; in a way, this attitude of Anna keeps Dave aloof from herself. After casting back together, they cynically utter some lines from newspapers and magazines to resist what society defines as “proportion”:

DAVE: Produce goods and children for the State.

ANNA: Marry young.

DAVE: The unit of society is a stable marriage.

ANNA: The unit of a healthy society is a well-integrated family.

DAVE: Earn money.

ANNA: Remember the first and worst sin is poverty.

DAVE: The first and best virtue is to own a comfortable home full of laboursaving devices.

ANNA: If you have too much leisure, there are football matches, the pools and television.

DAVE: If you still have too much leisure be careful not to spend it in ways that might rock the boat.

...ANNA: If you are dissatisfied with society, you are by definition unstable.

DAVE: If your soul doesn't fit into the patterns laid down for you –

ANNA: Kill yourself, but don't rock the boat.

DAVE: Be integrated.

ANNA: Be stable.

DAVE: Be secure.

ANNA: Be integrated or –

DAVE & ANNA: Die! Die! Die! (Act II).

In this act, the walls of Anna's room vanish, the stage becomes plainer, and the room and the street intermingle. For Lessing, “this stark set forces a certain formality of movement, stance and confrontation so that even when Dave and Anna are not alone on the stage creating their private world, there is a simplicity of style which links the two moods of the play together” (7). The destruction of totality in perception also resolves all the barriers of the mind. Hence, the audience becomes more responsive to this long dialogue between Anna and Dave throughout Act II. “This territory is also where the man controls the woman's

access to her inner life. When she is displaced from her territory the man seizes the power, both materially and psychically” (Wander, 2001). Dave is self-confident and manipulative in attitude in this act; he reigns over the psychological instability of Anna, who is vulnerable when the play’s domestic setting (female sphere) has turned into a public one (male sphere).

Janet is a complete contrast to Anna concerning her views on marriage and motherhood. Janet is a young American girl who has had an affair with Dave and got pregnant. Anna is about to be entrapped and get stuck in a patriarchal dead-end. However, in contrast to Anna, Janet is conventionally feminine in her views. “I am just an ordinary girl, and I want to be married” (Act I), she says to Anna. For Janet, marriage is for the sake of marriage. It is like a career she will advance in, and she states: “I believe that marriage and the family are the most rewarding career a woman can have” (Act I).

“Janet perpetuates the fifties idea that marriage and a family constitute the ultimate career for a woman. She intends to ‘trap’ Dave into marrying her despite knowing of other women in his life” (Komporaly 22). Janet thinks that Anna is the primary obstacle in front of her marriage with Dave, and in an ironic Freudian attitude of envying the ‘penis’ and desiring maternity to replace it with a baby, she says, “I’ve got his baby, you haven’t. You can’t do anything about that, can you. I’ve got his baby, I’ve got him” (Act I). Janet is “the materialization of the mythology of motherhood produced by American “feminine mystique” ... Janet is the ludicrous epitome of American feminine passivity” (Anderlini-D’Onofrio, 1998). Therefore, Anna refuses to share anything in common with her related to motherhood and marriage, and this refusal makes her remember her own relationship with her mother in her childhood in Australia. Marriage and motherhood were integrated for her mother, as it is for Janet. Refusing to replicate her mother’s life and choices, she echoes her mother’s thoughts on marriage as Dave echoes her father; both give a lengthy monologue on the hypocrisy of the idea of “a well-integrated marriage” imposed on the younger ones:

ANNA [speaking aloud the monologue of her mother’s thoughts]: Yes, that’s how I spend my life, pinching and saving – all day, cooking and preserving, and making clothes for the kids... And it’s for a man who doesn’t even know I’m here ... I didn’t lack for men before I married – they came running when I smiled. Ah God in heaven, if I hadn’t married this good-for-nothing here, I’d be a great pianist, I’d know all the golden cities of the world -Paris, Rome, London, I’d know the great world, and here I am, stuck in a dump like this, with two ungrateful kids and a no-good husband ...” (Act II).

In these imaginary monologues, both father and mother suffer from the expectancies and limitations of a well-integrated marriage. Behaving as the subconsciousness of her mother and father, Anna and Dave dream of their possibilities if they were offered a choice in their lives. Anna recollects that her mother is a promising talented pianist. After giving birth to Anna, she never touches the piano again. The fact is that marriage neither builds a career for a woman nor develops her talent. Her parents' marriage is nothing more than a "compassion of one prisoner to another" (Act II). Anna's mother is one of the women whom Betty Friedan exemplifies in her *The Feminine Mystique* (1974); she is a woman who is told: "how to catch a man and keep him, how to breastfeed children ... how to buy a dishwasher, bake bread, cook gourmet snails... how to dress, look, and act more feminine and make marriage more exciting". Friedan said these women "were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents" (1974). By rejecting duplicating her mother's destiny, she deconstructs the reproduction of the traditional motherhood figure and denies marriage as an institution in these terms. All these stable and well-integrated marriages around her, marriages of her parents, neighbours and friends entrapped in the boundaries of the patriarchal institution of marriage, have been effective in Anna to decide against marriage: "If I go down in loneliness and misery, if I die alone somewhere in a furnished room in a lonely city that doesn't know me – I'll do that sooner than marry as my father and mother were married" (Act II).

The last female character in this play is Mary, who shares a room in Anna's house. The male characters in this play, Dave, Tom, and Harry are all obsessed with her being a single mother as a middle-aged woman. They cannot comprehend the reason for her being a "spinster". Mary also contrasts Janet because "she does not want to get married just for the sake of getting married" (Act I). Both Harry and Tom have a sexist and ageist attitude towards Mary. She should "marry regardless of the first clot who comes along" (Act I). However, Anna answers, "Perhaps she prefers to be sex-starved than to marry an idiot, which is more than can be said about most men" (Act I). "She establishes her territorial rights through her friendship with Mary, who is similarly independent. However, this female friendship, although strong and secure, exists in a world where relationships with men take up a lot of time and attention" (Wander, 2001).

At this point, we can also talk about Helen; although she does not appear in the play, she has an essential role in constructing the patriarchy embodied in Harry. Helen is Harry's wife. Helen ignores her husband's love affairs as a "forgiving

woman”. Both Helen and Harry are pretty aware of the fact that as a submissive and loyal wife who is “wonderful, delightful, very happy and loves (him) dearly” (Act I), Helen is supposed to forgive and forget. Therefore, Helen is the most respected woman in the play compared to Anna and Mary. Harry openly exploits women for his ends. However, his manly ego gets hurt when he learns one of his young lovers is about to marry. He returns to his wife to weep on her shoulders, expecting sympathy. “She’ll forgive him alright. He’ll even use her compliance as an additional attraction for the little girls. My wife understands me, he’ll say with a sloppy look on his face” (Act I). For Harry, ideal womanhood is internalized in Helen, not in Mary and Anna, who are independent in all terms: “There should be a certain number of understanding women in the world whose task is to bind up the wounds of warriors like Dave and me” (Act III). However, in this play, the women are “the betrayed women of the heartless libertine (who) get together to lick their wounds” (Act II), not the wounds of men. So, at the end of the play, Mary, who is near Anna, keeps around herself to support her, who is punished with loneliness by the patriarchal men in this play, while Helen and Janet are “rewarded” with male dependence in their already entrapped lives.

CONCLUSION

In this context, *Play with a Tiger* and *Each His Own Wilderness* problematize motherhood practices, especially post-war representations of traditional mother image. In both plays, the mothers are destined to be entrapped in the domestic sphere by sons, lovers, or a patriarchal institution. In this respect, these women, significantly the financially independent ones in both plays, confront the dilemma of conventional motherhood and liberated femininity and exceed the limitations of socially constructed motherhood.

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